



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on Observance of Earth Day

As delivered by Chargé d' Affaires Kyle Scott
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
April 19, 2007

Mr. Chairman,

This Sunday, April 22nd, marks the thirty-sixth anniversary of Earth Day. Earth Day is a time to re-dedicate ourselves to the protection of our planet. Around the world and across the United States, governments, environmental organizations and citizens will gather to commemorate Earth Day and to participate in clean-ups of beaches, forests and parks. Some of our OSCE field presences will also conduct activities, including educational and awareness-raising actions. We very much support those activities.

Environmental problems have no boundaries. They threaten the health, prosperity, and security of everyone. When there is a lack of access to energy, clean water, food or a safe, livable environment, the resulting economic and political instability affects us all. Seeking cooperation and the active participation of all countries can help build security and confidence. That should be the lesson of the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River, the Sava River Commission, and the cooperation among those countries who were so greatly affected by the devastating toxic spill that swept down the Tisza River into the Danube several years ago. Our organization, the OSCE, should look to contribute to that process everywhere in areas where environmental hazards threaten regional security.

Climate change is another pressing challenge facing countries across the globe. I'd like to thank the Spanish Chairmanship for their effort to concentrate and focus our attention on this issue. Contrary to what some may believe, the United States is actively addressing climate change. We have developed a diverse portfolio of policy measures, including dozens of mandatory measures, other incentive-based measures, and finally, voluntary programs that aim to address climate change, and we have been making progress at a faster rate than most other developed countries in cutting our emissions growth. From 2000 to 2004, the last years where there are reliable figures available, the United States' greenhouse gas emissions grew, it is true, but only by 1.3 percent, while our economy during the same period grew by over 19 percent and our population grew by 11.3 million people. If I can contrast that, the EU has also been making extreme efforts and extreme measures, and great progress in their production of their greenhouse gas emissions. But during the same period where EU economic growth was less than that of the United States, the increase in the greenhouse emissions from the EU 15 countries was actually 2.4 percent -- greater than that of the United States.

How are we making progress in lowering the growth of our emissions? We are working very hard to bring cleaner technology into the marketplace through a combination of targeted market decisions, incentives, voluntary partnerships and mandatory programs. Yes, the United States remains number one in greenhouse gas emissions, but this is because we are also the largest national economy in the world. It is interesting to note that the dubious honor of the largest greenhouse gas emitter is likely one we will cede within this decade to another country.

That is why we must work multilaterally to cut global emissions. To be effective, we need a global approach that supports both human development and lower emissions. To achieve the

goals committed to under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and reiterated by leaders at the G8 Gleneagles Summit in 2005, we need to recognize that the issues of development, energy, emissions and democracy are all inter-related and of fundamental importance to our people and our nations. We need human progress AND freedom AND clean, secure sources of energy.

Mr. Chairman, last year we noted that the OSCE conducts some important environmental projects, but that we were giving the Second Dimension short shrift. This year the Chairmanship chose an environmental theme for our work in the Dimension, and this has been a step in the right direction. We look forward to working with our multilateral partners to address the challenge of global climate change.

Thank you.